

## **Report to the 31<sup>st</sup> Standing Committee on CMS-related activities in Western Europe**

The UK, as representative for Western Europe, approached CMS parties in the region for information on their implementation of CMS to help compile this report.

### **Efforts to Recruit New Parties**

Russia: Germany continues to raise with Russia the matter of CMS accession. The next meeting (likely to be in Spring 2007) of the German-Russian bilateral working group on nature protection should take place in Bonn to enable the CMS Secretariat to participate in discussions on this subject. Russia raised no objections to having part of the meeting in the Secretariat's new offices.

South Pacific States: Germany has agreed, in principle, to provide CMS with €40,000 to organise a meeting before the end of 2006 in Palau to promote CMS and encourage countries in the South Pacific to accede to the Convention

China and Thailand: UK Environment minister raised CMS accession with Chinese and Thai ministers during a trip to Asia in July. Chinese gave a non-committal response. Chinese officials, however, will visit the UK in September to discuss nature conservation issues and the matter will be raised again then. Thailand expressed no interest in CMS.

### **Research**

Bird Migration: The Swiss Ornithological Institute has carried out studies into bird migration in Switzerland, Mauritania and Italy. The Mauritanian study examined bird densities at the Spring and Autumn stop-over site as birds crossed the Sahara; the Italian study looked at migration across the Strait of Messina as part of an environmental impact assessment related to plans for a bridge crossing; and the study in Switzerland covered ringing and counts of birds of all species at traditional lowland and mountain sites. More information on these studies can be obtained from the CMS Swiss focal point, Olivier Biber or through the following websites: [www.vogelwarte.ch](http://www.vogelwarte.ch); [www.nosoiseaux.ch](http://www.nosoiseaux.ch)

Climate change: The UK is considering letting a contract to develop standardised international protocols for monitoring the effects of climate change on migratory species; and to identify migratory species which can act as indicators of climate-change effects. Expressions of interest have been sought. Full tenders will be sought before the end of the year with a view to letting the contract early in 2007.

### **Support for CMS**

New Premises: Owing to the generous support of Germany, the CMS Secretariat and those of the co-located daughter agreements has new offices and bigger and better facilities. The UN Tower is expected to house more than 5,000 participants in the next 2-3 years.

Avian Influenza: The UK provided funds as a contribution to a UNEP seminar in Nairobi in April this year which looked at the role of wild birds in spreading Avian Influenza. The outcome of this seminar can be obtained from the CMS Secretariat.

#### CMS Publications:

- The UK has sponsored a publication on climate change which draws on the presentations made at the CMS CoP8 side event in Nairobi last year. The publication is expected to be launched at the UNFCCC CoP in Nairobi this November.
- The UK has provided funds for a publication on corporate sector engagement; and a leaflet for children

#### **Species Activities**

Sturgeon: Germany is working with the Council of Europe (Bern Convention) and France on developing an action plan to protect the European sturgeon (*Accipenser sturio*), which is viewed as the most endangered sturgeon species. The first meeting took place in July in France. This heard presentations on the main threats (seen as over-fishing, pollution and dams); ex-situ conservation activities; and on the risks associated with a restoration programme.

The meeting also considered a draft action plan drawn up by consultants. This will be revised to accommodate information from countries on issues such as species identification; present and past causes of decline; and the need and viability of captive breeding and re-introduction programmes. The Bern Convention Standing Committee in November should hear a report on progress to develop this action plan. A second meeting on this sturgeon initiative is expected to take place in Germany in the Spring of 2007.

Raptors: Building on the CMS CoP8 recommendation, the UK is exploring with range states their appetite for a CMS daughter agreement on raptors in Africa and Eurasia. A leaflet to promote the initiative is being developed and a study has been commissioned to explore whether the boundaries of any possible agreement should extend into South East Asia, following the interest expressed by countries in that region to be involved. A date for the first inter-governmental meeting has been provisionally scheduled for April next year in Bonn.

Sharks: The UK is providing funds for a CMS study into the conservation status of migratory sharks and the threats they face. This will inform a January workshop in the Seychelles which will consider how best to develop an instrument to conserve these species.

#### **Daughter Agreements**

Aquatic Warbler: Germany hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Aquatic warbler Meeting of Parties in Brandenburg in June this year. The UK has contributed voluntary funding for a project on wintering grounds.

AEWA: Germany is to commence co-financing the GEF-Wetlands International global flyway project shortly. The UK has provided funds to support delegates' attendance at the Technical Committee and Standing Committee meetings; for the development of a strategic plan; and to develop an international partnership to support waterbird population assessments.

ASCOBANS: Germany will be marking harbour porpoise day

EUROBAT~~Surobats~~: There will be events across Germany to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> European Bat night

ACAP: The UK environment minister has raised ACAP accession with his US counterpart on two occasions since the ACAP Advisory Committee meeting in June. The UK has also provided funds for delegates to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> MoP in November.

Saiga Antelope MoU: UK officials have raised with officials from the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources the matter of signing the MoU and attending the meeting of signatories in Kazakhstan in September.

Indian Ocean Turtles MoU: The UK has provided funds for a DVD on turtles and for a turtles tagging project as part of the Year of the Turtle initiative.